
From: Phyllissha Butler
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 9:26 AM
To: MND Schiltz_Chambers
Subject: Victor Edwards

CAUTION - EXTERNAL:

My name is Phyllissha Butler, I am apart of an organization that works closely with the black community in regard to justice and injustices. More specifically I do work focused on keeping the black man in the home to foster stronger family systems as well as healthy child development.

I am contacting you in regard to Victor Edwards who is currently incarcerated in Sherburne County Jail.

I was able to be apart of one of Victor's court proceedings. The prosecuting attorney explained to the court that Victor has an extensive criminal history and that he has had issues with not showing up to court dates. This seems to be the issue for why he was not granted a bail and instead of being home being able to be a father to his children, he is sitting in jail not being affective to anyone at this time.

I am prepared to provide the court with several character statements in support of Victor as well as statements from professionals whom Victor works closely with to speak to the fact that Victor has been progressing for the past five years. What the prosecuting attorney did in court was continue to oppress Victor and punish him for his past. Incarceration is supposed to be about reform. Well, after Victor spent several months in jail in 2016 he showed signs of reform. The missed court dates and various criminal charges were prior to or shortly after his incarceration. Victor participates in therapy sessions and community projects that has aided his reform. Of course like all people, Victor should be allowed to make a few mistakes without the fear of being overly prosecuted. We know this all too well in the black community.

Victor's various charges for driving offenses and offenses in regard to the consumption of alcohol prove that people need treatment and programs to help with people obtaining their driver's license; Not Incarceration! People who have these offenses are labeled as criminals and not afforded opportunities to rid themselves of those labels, stigmas and background. The prosecuting attorney proved this by mentioning his past crimes as if they were recent and reflect the man that Victor is today.

I am not asking that you change the entire justice system today. I am asking that you make it possible for a person's change and growth to be reflected when considering the outcome of their life. I am asking that Victor be judged on his merits of most recent and not only of his demerits from his past. I am asking that you allow this man to be home with his children and his family while he completes the rest of his trial. I am asking that you consider alternatives to incarceration while this man finishes his trial. It may seem like I am asking a lot but, I am still asking and hoping that you are listening.

I want to say thank you for allowing me this access to you. Access to justice in the black community has been limited and to know that I can reach out to you about specific cases is powerful and essential to the advancement of black people in our community.

Please excuse and grammatical errors I may have missed; my passion around this issue sometimes gets my words jumbled!

I'm hoping myself or Victor will hear from you soon or that this information will find it's way to best support Victor.

Best Regards,

Phyllissha

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